

Relation of Foresters to the Logging Department

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THESE is no doubt but that every forester has decided views regarding the relationship of foresters to logging operations. Although all foresters may see eye to eye with respect to the aims of the profession of forestry, variation in conditions under which each is practising as well as variations in the character of the individual, has resulted and will result in varied conceptions of the means by which the aim is to be realized. No one can lay down a set of rules for all to follow saying "Do this and your desire shall be fulfilled." The conditions under which we are all working are so different that the relationship of each to the woods operations must also differ. The complexity of the element of personnel is sufficiently evident to impress us with this fact.

We may, however, through an interchange of ideas upon this subject evolve certain principles which will serve to guide us all in the formation of our working policies.

The Aim of Foresters.

Let us start from a point upon which we are all agreed, the aim of the practice of forestry. Briefly expressed, it is the continuous production of merchantable woods products upon all land chiefly valuable for growing trees. To obtain this end two courses of endeavor are apparent. One leads towards research, the establishment of certain silvicultural truths. The other toward industrial practice, the application of the established truth to a given forest problem. The members of one group, free from the trammels of commercialism, carry on purely scientific work. Members of the other group spend their efforts in making the practice of forestry pay in industry. The distinction between the two groups is definite. It has been through confusion of the two in minds of foresters themselves as well as in the minds of the public that has made the foresters' path so difficult.

In a regrettable number of cases where foresters are employed by wood-using industries the relationship between the foresters and the logging operations is like that between the Rocky Mountains and a mule, there may be contact but no relationship. True relationship must be based upon interdependence, when the aims of both are one and each is dependent upon the other for the attainment of the common end there is a basis for an ideal relationship.

At this point foresters cease to see eye to eye. Each one has his opinion of the ideal relationship that ought to exist, and, backed by the condition he knows, his opinion is doubtless sound.

But I believe we can agree on yet another point. When the chief of logging operations and the forester are the same person, the conditions for the practice of forestry are ideal. The conditions are ideal, for, in shouldering the responsibility of the operator to furnish the required supply of raw material to the plant annually, he will practise those principles of continuous production, and only those, that he is able to practise without increasing his present costs prohibitively. He will do that which we are all desirous of doing, practise as much of ideal forestry as the economic conditions and the financial position of his company allows.

Personal Relationships.

In the absence of such a situation, i.e., that of a forester in charge of woods operation, there may exist any of a great variety of situations. But whatever the relationship between the logging department and the forester should be, it is what the policy of the company permits it to be. Personal enmity between individuals is often a means of preventing the establishment of a proper relationship, even when a comprehensive policy in regard to the handling of woodlands has been expressed. The factor of personal enmity is entirely outside of the scope of this paper, but I mention it because, when all other conditions for co-operation are favorable, this factor may cause failure. Progress in forestry practice cannot be made until the trouble has been eradicated.

For a moment let us consider the aim of logging departments in order to ascertain how that aim differs from the aim of the profession of forestry, and therefore of the forester. The woods department, or logging department, is established in order to cut and deliver to a wood-using plant, sufficient raw material to supply the annual needs of that plant. The aim of the logging department, then, is the cutting and delivery of sufficient wood each year (at a minimum cost), to supply the annual demands of the plant for which that department exists. The logging department is the "harvester." It is not anything else. It was established for no other purpose. But, if we add the word "continuously" after the word "plant," so that the aim reads thus—"The cutting and delivery of